

Wilderness Inventory Unit Index of Documents
Steer Canyon OR-036-013, 13 total pages

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H-6300-1-WILDERNESS INVENTORY MAINTENANCE IN BLM OREGON/WASHINGTON

APPENDIX B – INVENTORY AREA EVALUATION

Evaluation of Current Conditions:

- 1) Document and review the existing BLM wilderness inventory findings on file, if available, regarding the presence or absence of individual wilderness characteristics, using Form 1, below.
- 2) Consider relevant information regarding current conditions available in the office to identify and describe any changes to the existing information (use interdisciplinary (ID) team knowledge, aerial photographs, field observations, maps, etc.), and document your findings on Form 2, below.

When Citizen Information has been submitted regarding wilderness characteristics, document the submitted materials including: date of Submission; Name of District(s) and Field Office(s) Affected; Type of material Submitted (e.g. narrative, map, photo). Evaluate any submitted citizen information regarding the validity of proposed boundaries of the unit(s), the existence of roads and other boundary features, the size of the unit(s), and the presence or absence of wilderness characteristics based on relevant information available in the office (prior BLM inventories, ID team knowledge, aerial photographs, field observations, maps, etc.)

Conduct field reviews as necessary to verify information and to ascertain current conditions. Reach conclusions on current conditions including boundaries, size of areas and presence or absence of wilderness characteristics. Fully explain the basis for each conclusion on form 2, including any critical differences between BLM and citizen information.

Document your findings regarding current conditions for each inventoried area. Describe how the present conditions are similar to, or have changed from, the conditions documented in the original wilderness inventory. Document your findings on Form 2 for each inventory area. Cite to or attach data considered, including photographs, maps, GIS layers, field trip notes, project files, *etc.*

Attachment 1

**H-6300-1-WILDERNESS INVENTORY MAINTENANCE
IN BLM OREGON/WASHINGTON**

APPENDIX B – INVENTORY AREA EVALUATION

Year: 2007Inventory Unit Name/Number: Steer Canyon OR-036-013FORM 1**DOCUMENTATION OF BLM WILDERNESS INVENTORY FINDINGS ON RECORD:**

- 1) **Is there existing BLM wilderness inventory information on all or part of this area?**
Yes X No ___

A.) Inventory Source(s)

(X) Denotes all applicable BLM inventory files, printed maps, or published BLM Decision documents with information pertaining to this unit.

Wilderness Inventories

- (X) 1978 - *BLM Wilderness Inventory Units OR-03-13-06* (unpublished BLM documents stored in 6-way case files).
- (X) April 1979 - *Proposed Initial Inventory – Roadless Areas and Islands Which Do Not Have Wilderness Characteristics* (yellow book).

Wilderness Decision Documents

- (X) August 1979 - *Wilderness Review – Initial Inventory: Final Decision on Public Lands Obviously Lacking Wilderness Characteristics, Oregon and Washington* (green book).
- () October 1979 - *Wilderness Review – Intensive Inventory: Oregon, Proposed Decision on the Intensive Wilderness Inventory of Selected Areas* (grey book).
- () March 1980 - *Wilderness Review – Intensive Inventory: Final Decisions on 30 Selected Units in Southeast Oregon and Proposed Decisions on Other Intensively Inventoried Units in Oregon and Washington* (orange book).
- () November 1980 - *Wilderness Inventory – Oregon and Washington, Final Intensive Inventory Decisions* (brown book).
- () November 1981 - *Stateline Intensive Wilderness Inventory Final Decision, Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, Utah* (tan pamphlet).

B.) Inventory Unit Name(s)/Number(s)

- BLM unpublished file OR-03-13-06 (1978); Steer Canyon 3-174 (August 1979 - *Wilderness Review – Initial Inventory: Final Decisions on Public Lands Obviously Lacking Characteristics, Oregon and Washington* [green book]).

C.) Map Name(s)/Number(s)

- Final Decision – Initial Wilderness Inventory Map August 1979
- Proposed Decision Intensive Wilderness Inventory of Selected Areas Map October 1979
- Intensive Wilderness Inventory Map March 1980
- Intensive Wilderness Inventory, Final Decisions Map November 1980
- November 1981 *Stateline Intensive Wilderness Inventory Final Decision, Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, Utah* (tan pamphlet)

D.) BLM District(s)/Field Office(s)

- Vale District/Jordan Resource Area

2) BLM Inventory Findings on Record:

Unit#/Name	Size (acres)	Natural Condition	Outstanding Solitude	Outstanding Primitive & Unconfined Recreation	Supplemental Values
Steer Canyon 3-174	9,160*	N	N	N	N
OR-13-03-05, OR-13-03-07, OR-13-03-08	6,015				
Total acres >>	15,175				

* BLM added 6,015 acres from three previously inventoried units, OR 03-13-05, OR 03-13-07, and OR 03-13-08.

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FORM 2**DOCUMENTATION OF CURRENT WILDERNESS INVENTORY CONDITIONS:****Inventory Unit Name/Number: Steer Canyon OR-036-013**

For this exercise BLM refers to the unit as 2007 Steer Canyon OR-036-013.

1) Is the unit of sufficient size?

Yes X No

The unit is comprised of 17,121 acres which meets the size criteria. BLM added 6,015 acres to the unit that had been dropped in 1978; previously inventoried units OR-03-13-05, OR-03-13-07, and OR-03-13-08 are now included within the Steer Canyon OR-036-013 boundaries.

Description:

The boundaries of this unit are identified as BLM road 6375-0-00 on the north, west, and east; BLM road 6355-1-00 on the south and east; and BLM road 8300-6-02 on the west. Unpublished 1978 BLM reports indicate that the boundary roads were maintained by a road grader. Periodic maintenance of these 23.4 miles of boundary roads has occurred in the recent past (no confirmed dates available) and they are used regularly by ranchers (as observed by current BLM staff) and by the BLM for livestock management. Refer to map 2007_Steer_Canyon_OR_036_013.pdf for the unit boundary.

2) Is the unit in a natural condition?

Yes No X

Description:

Unit OR-036-013 terrain consists of rolling hills and flats. The vegetation consists predominately of grasses and sagebrush. Human imprints within the unit include 13.05 miles of fence, two earthen reservoirs, 9.2 miles of pipeline for livestock water, and 10.0 miles of motorized primitive trails. Due to the number of intrusions, users moving through the unit would not be able to avoid the works of man. Overall, the area appears to be primarily affected by the influences of man. Refer to map 2007_Steer_Canyon_OR_036_013A.pdf for human imprints.

3) Does the unit have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

Yes No X

Description:

Unit OR-036-013 is approximately 10 miles in length and 6 miles in width in the central portion of the unit then tapers to about 2 miles wide near the northern and southern boundaries. The majority of the unit consists of a flat to rolling, open sagebrush plateau that slopes to the northeast following the Field and Pole Creek drainages. The only variation in topographic relief within the unit is the drainage depressions and a group of low, rolling hills near the eastern boundary. The drainages flow through broad, open, sagebrush flats and have a uniform gentle gradient that provides little opportunity for solitude. Topographic relief is minimal within the unit with elevations ranging from about 5,100 feet mean sea level (msl) along the northeastern corner where Field Creek exits the unit, rising to the southwest to about 5,890 feet (msl) near the southwestern corner. Elevation changes in most of the unit, traversing from north to south, are gradual and average about 60-80 feet per mile. The unit provides limited vegetative screening,

consisting of broad expanses of low and big sagebrush with little opportunity for solitude. Because of the existing 10-mile network of motorized primitive trails and the absence of vegetative or topographic screening, BLM unit OR-036-013 does not provide outstanding opportunities for solitude.

4) Does the unit have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation?

Yes No

Description:

Opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation are available in the unit. However, opportunities for activities such as hiking, backpacking, hunting, wildlife viewing, horseback riding, and photography are not outstanding because the unit lacks scenic quality, diversity of landforms, and challenging terrain. Field Creek, its tributary drainages, and tributary drainages to Pole Creek, are the only topographic features in the unit that alter the flatness of the terrain. The present inventory agrees with the 1978 inventory that determined the unit lacks exceptional scenery and the diversity of landforms that would result in a strong attraction to the unit for any type of primitive recreation activity. Backpacking across the unit could be a monotonous experience with no change in hiking conditions or scenery. There are no unique photographic opportunities in the unit because of the vast acres of homogeneous topography and vegetation, which lack significant points of interest or attractive sites. Despite the unit's size, the lack of scenic quality and lack of diverse landforms render the opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation less than outstanding. Although wildlife viewing opportunities have been identified as a recreational value within this unit, they are not considered to be outstanding by the inventory team.

5) Does the unit have supplemental values?

Yes No

Description:

With some minor exceptions, the ecological integrity of rangeland in this unit has been largely unaffected by the combined impacts of wildfire and invasive, non-native plants such as cheatgrass. This means the area possesses wildlife habitat supplemental values for sagebrush-dependent species of BLM management importance including pygmy rabbit, sagebrush vole, greater sage-grouse, Brewer's sparrow, black-throated sparrow, sage sparrow, loggerhead shrike, and sage thrasher. Observed rangeland conditions within this unit can be expected to contribute towards the existence of healthy sagebrush-dependent wildlife populations for a large area and over the long term because: (1) native plant functional and structural groups are well represented within the unit, and (2) wildlife forage, cover, and structure is available for use by species of management importance.

In contrast to conditions described above, rangeland at similar elevations and in similar ecological sites within Malheur County, Oregon has been highly disturbed due to the combined effects of improper historical grazing use, loss of biological crust integrity, invasive plant establishment, and catastrophic wildfire impacts over the last few decades. Cheatgrass presence is known to accelerate and aggravate wildfire spread because it is a highly flammable fine fuel, and wildfire often reduces or completely eliminates critical shrub-based forage, cover, and habitat structure values for many species of wildlife. Literally millions of acres of Wyoming big sagebrush habitat types, similar to those within this unit, have been burned over the last few decades and recovery of these losses will take multiple decades if not centuries to occur.

Finally, the land considered within this unit is also recognized as part of the Owyhee Uplands Physiographic Province, a region incorporating rangeland in Oregon, Idaho, and Nevada which supports some of the largest contiguous blocks of intact sagebrush steppe remaining west of the Continental Divide.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION:

Inventory Unit Name/Number: Steer Canyon OR-036-013

Summary

Results of Analysis:

- 1) Does the area meet any of the size requirements? **[Yes]** No
- 2) Does the area appear to be natural? Yes **[No]**
- 3) Does the area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation?
NA Yes **[No]**
- 4) Does the area have supplemental values?
NA **[Yes]** No

Conclusion

Check One:

- () The area, or a portion of the area, has wilderness character.
- (X) The area does not have wilderness character.

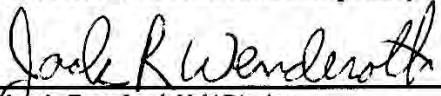
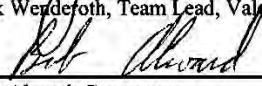
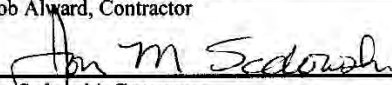
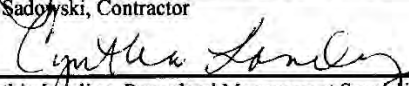
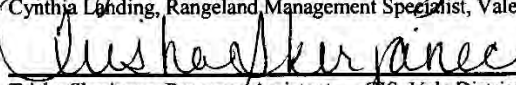
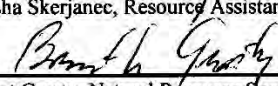
The ID team has reviewed the findings summarized in the original Statewide Wilderness Inventory as well as in the published decision documents and maps identified on Form 1. Current conditions relative to the presence or absence of wilderness characteristics have been considered including citizen wilderness proposals (no citizen proposal covering this unit). Based on all the best available information and staff field visits to the area since 2000, the ID team has found no compelling reasons to change existing BLM decisions about wilderness characteristics. While BLM finds that the naturalness of the area is primarily affected by the influences of man, there are supplemental values present, and the opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined recreation are limited for reasons already described.

Sources of Reference for Evaluation:

- All BLM documents listed in Form 1; existing BLM wilderness inventory information.
- Wilderness Inventory Recommendations: Vale District, Submitted by Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA), February 6, 2004.
- Current geographic information system (GIS) data on existing projects, vehicle routes/roads, land ownership, etc.
- BLM Job Documentation Record (JDR) files.
- National Agriculture Imagery Project digital images (2005).
- Official BLM Transportation Plan Map.
- BLM staff has obtained first-hand field knowledge about this unit’s plant communities, road conditions, and other attributes as a result of rangeland health investigations conducted between July and October of the year 2000. BLM gathered

quantitative rangeland data from trend plots in support of the assessment and evaluation process for Louse Canyon Geographic Management Area, but most other data collected for rangeland health evaluation purposes were either estimated or qualitative in nature. BLM staff has also visited this and adjoining units annually and on multiple occasions after 2000 in the process of establishing and reading riparian monitoring locations, performing layout and design work for rangeland development projects, conducting rangeland supervision duties, collecting livestock utilization data, and documenting current road conditions. Field observations were made during Rangeland Standards and Guides assessment work in 2000.

Wilderness Characteristics Interdisciplinary Team:

	<u>10/26/07</u>
Jack Wenderoth, Team Lead, Vale District	Date
	<u>10/26/07</u>
Bob Alward, Contractor	Date
	<u>10/26/07</u>
Jon Sadowski, Contractor	Date
	<u>10-26-07</u>
Cynthia Loding, Rangeland Management Specialist, Vale District	Date
	<u>10/26/07</u>
Trisha Skerjanec, Resource Assistant — GIS, Vale District	Date
	<u>10/26/07</u>
Brent Grasty, Natural Resource Specialist — GIS, Vale District	Date

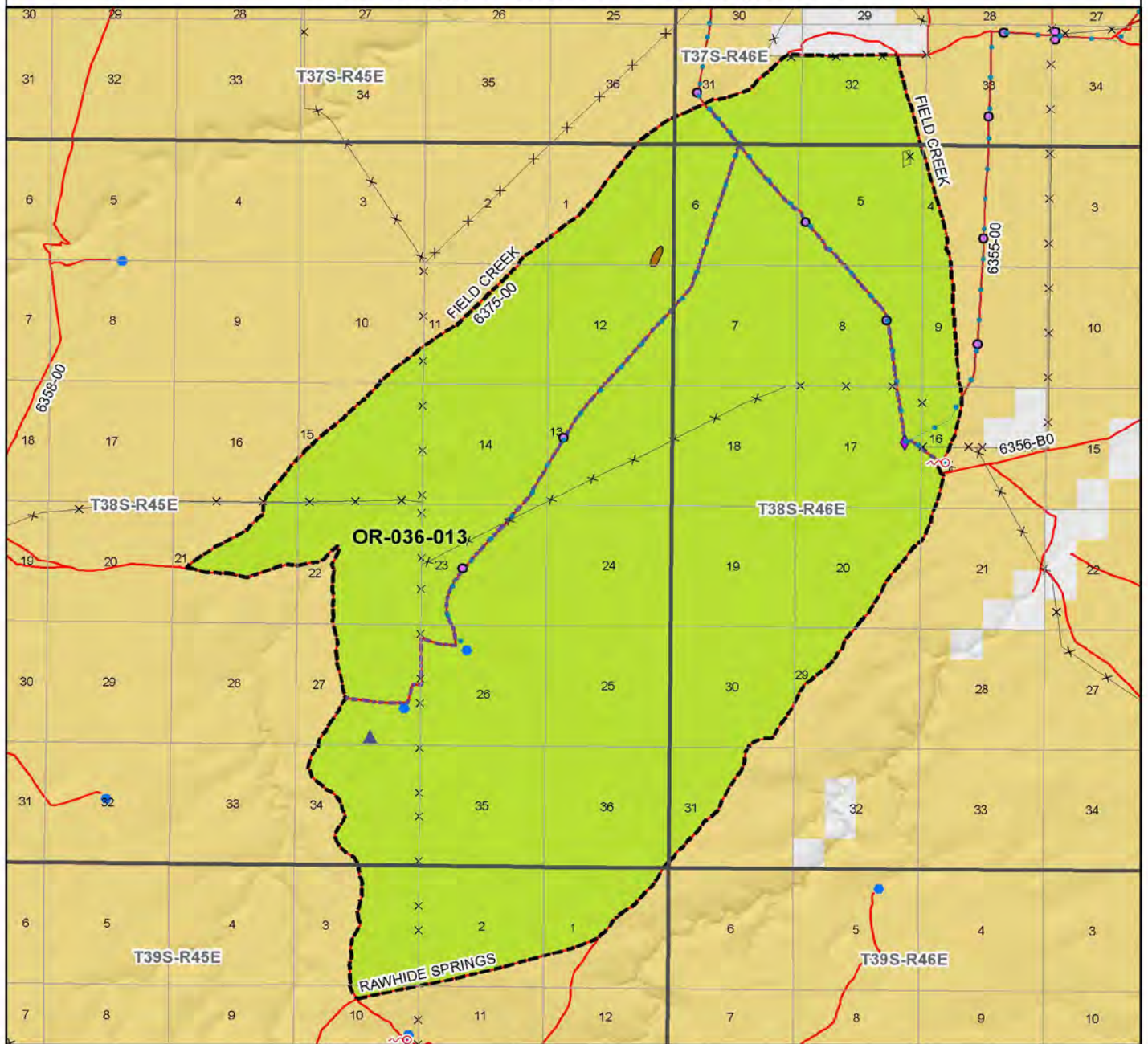
Concurrence:

	<u>10/26/07</u>
Carolyn R. Freeborn	Date
Field Manager, Jordan R. A.	

This form documents information that constitutes an inventory finding on wilderness characteristics. It does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision subject to administrative remedies under either 43 CFR parts 4 or 1610.5-2.

Wilderness Characteristics - Overview

Steer Canyon - OR-036-013 - Map 1 of 2



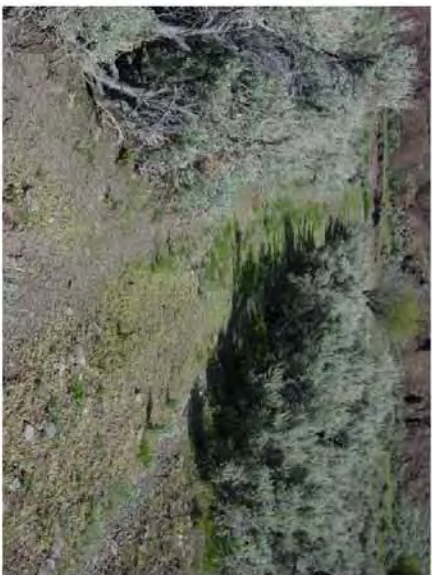
<p>Legend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed Spring Wildlife Guzzler Earthfill Reservoir Pipeline Trough Fence Storage Tank Surface Mining Disturbance Sage Grouse Lek Special Status Plant BLM Wild Char Inventory Unit Wilderness Study Area Mineral Material Site Road/Utility Right-of-Way Major Water Body 	<p>Route Types - BLM Determination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boundary Road Motorized Primitive Trail (MPT) Discontinued Use <p>Routes - Outside Wild Char Unit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Major Highway BLM Numbered & Other Routes <p>Land Ownership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bureau of Land Management State Private Other Federal Land 		<div style="text-align: center;"> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> </div>	<p>U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT</p> <p>VALE DISTRICT March 30, 2010</p> <p><small>No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources. This information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This product was developed through digital means and may be updated without notification.</small></p> <p>--FINAL--</p>
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